(d) if so, the strategies to be adopted by Government to safeguard the interest of the labourers and upliftment of labour laws in SEZ in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) ILO has not explicitly urged the Government of India to fulfil its commitment on safeguarding labour laws in the Special Economic Zones. However, ILO Committee on Freedom of Association and Committee on Application of Conventions and Recommendations have requested Government of India to provide information and ensure the principles of Freedom of Association and labour inspections in the Special Economic Zones.

(b) Government of India has informed ILO Committees that the principle of Freedom of Association is being maintained in all manufacturing units including Special Economic Zones.

(c) ILO has mentioned that most of the Special Economic Zones worldwide are being covered by the respective National Labour Legislation barring few cases where investors are exempted from some of the basic provisions of Labour Laws to attract the investment. In few cases the lack of resources to monitor the enterprises also results in compromise with some of the Labour Laws.

(d) The Special Economic Zones Act, 2005 does not preclude applicability of the Labour Laws in SEZs.

Legislation for Unorganised Sector Workers

377. SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN:
SHRI MOHAMMED AMIN:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to refer to reply to Unstarred Question No. 1166 given in the Rajya Sabha on 22.8.2007 regarding countrywide strike by workers of unorganised sector and state:

(a) whether in a meeting with all the Central Trade Unions (CTUs) held on 11th August, 2007 at New Delhi, Government sought the opinion of the CTUs; and

(b) whether Central Trade Unions unanimously demanded two separate comprehensive legislations for Agricultural workers and Unorganised sector (non-agricultural) workers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Most of the Central Trade Unions suggested to bring two separate comprehensive legislations for Agricultural and Non-Agricultural workers.

Technical Expert Group on foreign assistance for rural development

378. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:
SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry is working out a plan to monitor and regulate foreign assistance for rural development in India more strictly and has set up a seven-member high powered Technical Expert Group to scrutinize the ongoing rural development programmes in different regions of the country and recommended ways to streamline the fund flow in the regions which are in utmost need;

(b) if so, by what time technical group is likely to submit its recommendations; and

(c) the steps being considered to implement them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Question does not arise. However, a High-Powered Technical Expert Group (TEG)

has been set up in the Department of Drinking Water Supply to examine various emerging issues and challenges in the rural drinking water and sanitation sector and suggest measures to tackle the new challenges which *inter alia* include review of activities and the contribution of international and bilateral agencies and recommend action of possible areas of their activities to increase the impact of their limited support to help the efforts of the Ministry/Mission and recommend better coordination mechanism for improved interventions for increasing regional and international collaboration, and new mechanism for betterment of the partnership with bilateral and multilateral agencies, civil society, NGOs/CBOs, private sector, State Governments, R&D institutions and PRIs.

Expansion of NREG Scheme

†379. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether decision has been taken for further expansion of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in the country;

(b) if so, the number of districts in the country where this scheme has been implemented; and

(c) what is the estimate amount of money required for implementation of this scheme after expansion and the amount distributed up to September during 2007-08 and the number of persons likely to be benefited by the end of the year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU): (a) Yes, Sir. Government has decided to extend NREGA to all the remaining rural districts in the country including Union Territories with effect from 1.4.2008.

(b) 200 districts were covered in the first phase with effect from 2.2.2006 and 130 districts were covered in the second phase in the financial year 2007-08. The remaining 266 districts have been included in the third phase of implementation of the Act from 1.4.2008.

(c) NREGA is demand driven and not an allocation based programme. A National Employment Guarantee Fund has been established for providing funds to the States for implementation of the Act. Provisions are made in the budget for implementation of the Act on the basis of funds utilized by the States and also on the basis of demand for work in the previous year. For the current financial year, a budget provision of Rs. 12,000 crores was made for implementation of the Act. Up to September 2007, a sum of Rs. 6798.97 crore had been released by the Centre to the various states. NREGA is demand driven. Adult members of any rural household may apply for employment under the Act subject to an over all ceiling of 100 days of employment in a financial year per household. Therefore, no targets can be fixed for providing employment under the Act.

Misuse of funds meant for Employment Guarantee in Chhattisgarh

†380. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether case of misuse of funds meant for National Rural Employment Guarantee in the State of Chhattisgarh and some other States have come to light;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.